

To: Esteemed Senators and Representatives of the Connecticut Public Health Committee
Re: Raised Bill No. 6519 An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food (GMO)

I am in strong support of referenced Bill No 6519. This Bill brings forth a basic and paramount principle: **The Right To Know!!** Whether an individual is pro-GMO or anti-GMO is not the issue at hand. The BioTech science industry has NOT substantiated the safety of GMO foods in a meaningful way and consumers must be afforded the freedom to choose. "In the European Union, it can take 10 years or more to obtain approval for a new food additive. This includes five years of safety testing, followed by two years for evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority and another three years before the additive receives an EU-wide approval for use in every country in the European Union. Apart from testing and analyzing food products during the whole production process to ensure safety and compliance with regulatory standards, trading standards officers (in the UK) protect the public from any illegal use or potentially dangerous miss-use of food additives by performing random testing of food products." In the USA, FDA has deemed GMOs as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) and instructed the Biotech industry to self-regulate to insure the safety of GMO foods. I WISH FOR STRICT TESTING LIKE THE EU, SO INSTEAD PLEASE LABEL MY FOOD SO I HAVE A CHOICE.

There is a general lack of industry health safety testing of GMOs. In January 2013, European regulators discovered a hidden viral gene in commercial GMO crops. They commented that considering the perspective of professional and scientific risk assessment, this situation represents a complete and *catastrophic system failure*. I WANT TO SELECT NON-GMO FOODS FOR MY FAMILY'S HEALTH.....

Even more worrisome is that the Genetically Engineering process involves "a little-known fact that during the genetic modification, **e-coli** is used to clone the transgenic (genetically modified) DNA before it is inserted into plant cells. The plant cells are then grown into transgenic crops such as those bearing the label Roundup Ready. The reason **e-coli**, or Escherichia coli, are used is because, like agro bacteria, which is used to insert the transgenic DNA into the plant cell during the genetic modification procedure, **e-coli** is highly prolific. It is also able to transfer DNA via horizontal or lateral transfer to and from other species. How is this significant? New strains of E. coli evolve through the natural biological process of mutation and through horizontal gene transfer. Some strains develop traits that can be harmful to a host animal." I want the in alienated right to chose what foods I believe is the safest and the most nutritious for myself and my loved ones. I chose not to be BioTech industry's test specimen. Nor do I choose to rely on firms with a track record like Monsanto and Dow Chemical to protect my food supply. "A French court declared U.S. biotech giant Monsanto guilty of chemical poisoning of a French farmer, a judgment that could lend weight to other health claims against pesticides.(Reuters)". And to avoid this potential health hazards by personal choice, I NEED OUR FOOD LABELED!!!

Poll after poll has shown that Americans favor GMO labeling. A recent poll by Huffington Post indicated 82% in favor of the labeling of GMOs. The BioTech industry

has alleged that GMOs are safe for human and livestock consumption. And yet, US livestock are the largest consumers of GMOs, penned in gestation crates and are sickly, which prompts increased use of antibiotics. I DO NOT WANT TO EAT ANIMAL OR DAIRY FOODS PUMPED WITH ANTIBIOTICS AND SOLELY FED GMO FEED!!

"A suite of next generation GE seeds is heading for USDA approval, with the first application sitting on Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's desk right now. Of the 13 GE seeds in the pipeline, 10 are designed to withstand applications of specific herbicides. These crops — including Dow's 2,4-D-resistant corn and Monsanto's dicamba-resistant soybean — are designed to drive up the use of these volatile chemicals. More widespread use of 2,4-D (better known as Agent Orange) and dicamba will result in more pesticide drift, destroying neighboring crops and placing the burden of increased costs and health risks on farmers and rural communities." I DO NOT WANT TO INGEST AGENT ORANGE!!
PLEASE LABEL MY FOOD!!

The BioTech industry repeatedly tells us that GMOs is safe. I say "Prove it!!" Where is the scientific data?? And if GMOs are safe, stop world hunger, increase farming profits, and are environmentally sustainable, let's shout it from the mountaintops. Where are the advertisements touting the benefits of GMOs? Why not proudly label the GMO contents? Big Food has no compunction in labeling GMO products "natural", although such labeling is not required (and often misleading to the average consumer). Big Food Corporations silence is deafening on this issue and invites skepticism, since they spend millions in defeating initiatives for GMO labeling. WHAT IS THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY HIDING??? I CHOOSE ZERO RISK IN MY FAMILY'S HEALTH.
PLEASE LABEL GMOs.

Over 60 countries require GMO labeling, including Russia, Europe, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, New Zealand, India, Peru, Syria (yes, Syria!!) and others. What do these countries know that we don't know? Or better yet, is it what is *not known* about GMOs that have prompted these countries to proceed with great caution until the scientific data is revealed..... After all, IT IS ALL ABOUT OUR HEALTH!!!

GMO foods have been released in our food chain since 1996. Now is the time for the Connecticut General Assembly to debate this issue. Please afford the citizens of Connecticut this basic democratic right by overwhelmingly approve Raised Bill No 6519 and pull it out of committee. I leave you with one thought from an anonymous source: "*During the world's changing agricultural market, what we choose to buy today, is what we tell the farmers to grow tomorrow. Choose your food and you choose your freedom.*"

Respectfully,

Olga Raimondi
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